

INTRODUCTION

What can a neighborhood analysis do for your community and what are the purposes behind such an undertaking? These questions may be answered best by drawing a loose analogy: A town that is being analyzed, neighborhood by neighborhood or block by block is quite similar to a person getting a physical checkup. A thorough once-over is being given to the various parts of a living system that is your community. Unlike a medical checkup, however, the community under examination is seldom, if ever, handed a bill of perfect health. There are, or so it seems, always some aspects of this complicated, fragile and ever changing system that are on the blink and warrant remedial attention. In a neighborhood analysis, therefore, the emphasis is not to praise the merits and virtues already known, but to find out what is wrong with a community, to identify the causes, to determine the extent and above all, to suggest what can be done about the situation.

Take Zebulon, for example. For all outward appearances, it is a sedate, tree-shaded community, well cared for by most of its fifteen hundred residents. It also seems to be better maintained than most of the similar size towns in the region. Indeed, these observations are not at all false, nor the impressions deceptive. But is there nothing in the least "wrong" with the town physically and no room for further upgrading?

We think not. First, let us take the other side of the tracks. That description is figurative as well as literal. To say this area is dilapidated ought not to raise too many eyebrows within the community. But how about other parts of the town? Do they too show some ominous signs of deterioration? What are they and how bad?

It should be of concerning interest for all civic-minded townsmen to find out the conditions of their own immediate neighborhood as well as other people's. It would be also informative to know the relative standings of various blocks in terms of over-all livability.

In this study, then, we shall try to pin down just how "substandard" is a particular block in relation to the rest of the community. The standards used are strictly those accepted locally, such as the provisions of the adopted zoning ordinance, subdivision regulations, housing codes and others. Potential causes will first be categorized and analyzed and remedies will then be made in accordance to their nature and their intensities. Putting it in a different way, the basic purpose of this study is to prescribe a few worthwhile ounces of prevention now that may well spare the future generations many pounds of cure.